

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2003/09/02 : CIA-RDP80B01676R001200040002-5

1 May 1958

*Gard*  
General E. E. Partridge, USAF  
Commander-in-Chief  
North American Air Defense Command  
Ent Air Force Base  
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Dear General Partridge,

Your letter of 22 April is very encouraging to our efforts to obtain critical intelligence information. We are certainly determined to avoid, if at all possible, being caught by some "technological surprise".

Possibilities for technological improvement of the air-breathing vehicle and its possible uses to which you allude are provocative. We have been of late giving these matters close study and will continue to do so.

As you point out, our over-all defense posture in the face of gaps in intelligence poses for national authorities a very difficult question. Naturally, we in intelligence are eager to do all that we can to identify the real threats so that national defense expenditures need not be applied to preparations against all possible threats.

We were only too glad to provide the briefing on 9 April, and we will want to bring you up-to-date when and if we have additional material that warrants your attention. I appreciate your letter and your offer of assistance for which I would not hesitate to ask should occasion warrant.

ORIGINATOR:

Sincerely yours,



*Signed*

Allen W. Dulles  
Director

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**NORTH AMERICAN AIR DEFENSE COMMAND  
ENT AIR FORCE BASE  
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO**

**22 April 1958**

**OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

**Mr. Allen W. Dulles  
Director  
Central Intelligence Agency  
2430 E Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C.**

**Dear Mr. Dulles:**

You will recall the briefing I received on 8 April on your very important reconnaissance project.

The briefing was a real education for me and since receiving it I have realized more and more the importance of what I saw and heard and the actual and potential impact of this project on my own command responsibilities. If one were to catalogue the information made available as a result of this project, against the information one would have had without it, the extreme importance of this work would be more fully realized. The information produced is strategic warning of the highest order insofar as the mission of this command is concerned.

There are obvious dangers in connection with this work which extend far beyond its operational aspects and which must be weighed against other factors. I should like to suggest however that the danger of being caught by complete technological surprise is also real and might well in the long run be the greater danger. The recently published NSC document 5802/1 states that it is imperative that we do not suffer "technological surprise." In my opinion, it is impossible to prevent this with any of the other collection systems now available to us.

The portion of the project which has to do with processing and analyzing the material received is obviously receiving the highest priority by most competent hands. The part of the project concerned with collection concerns me because of restrictions which appear to be threatening the project, and because of the feeling expressed to me by a member of your organization that technologically we have reached a limit of improvement insofar as the air-breathing vehicle is concerned. I do not necessarily agree with this feeling for the following reasons:

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This is the 2 of 3 copies.

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**Pers Ltr to Mr. Allen W. Dulles, 22 April 1958 - Continued**

In the first place, we are a long way from exhausting the exploitation of the earth's air envelope. We are learning more about air-breathing operations every day and a great deal of knowledge exists within our industry which, if applied for a specific purpose, could produce a better vehicle. Next, the fear of surface-to-air missile development can be met for some time to come by staying away from areas in which these missiles might be deployed. In addition, we know from our own experience that it is extremely difficult to acquire, track, and destroy an elusive target with these ground-to-air systems. And lastly, again as expressed by the National Security Council in NSC 5802/1, this information must be collected even though grave risks might be involved.

You are more aware than I of the impact of gaps in our information on the development of our overall defense posture. Lacking firm data we may well be spending billions of dollars for the development of the wrong system or for the development of a military posture which will be inadequate at the time when it will be most needed. From this it follows that it would be far better to spend a portion of our national wealth in getting the necessary correct answers than in applying a great deal of our national wealth in trying to react to all possible threats. The same reasoning would follow when considering the allocation of our political and psychological resources. It would be far better in my opinion to take a temporary political or psychological set-back now if this would put us in a stronger national position in the future. These are, of course, ideas which must be carefully considered at the highest national level and are offered to you as of possible assistance in your dealings at that level.

May I express my thanks and appreciation for having had this interesting and valuable information made available to me. Please be assured that I stand ready to assist you on this project in any way that I can.

Sincerely yours,

E. E. PARTRIDGE  
General, USAF  
Commander-In-Chief

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Remarks:

Jim: The Director has asked that a brief reply to the attached letter from General Partridge be prepared for his signature -- to include an expression of our appreciation for his letter and the points he raises are being studied.

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